POL 14 VIET-S

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 04226 281313Z

48
ACTION EA 10

INFO OPR 03,SC 01,RSC 01,USIA 12,H 02,NSC 10,NSAE 00,L 03,INR 07,P 04,
CIA 04,DOD 01,SP 02,SS 35,SAL 01,AID 30,RSR 01,IO 21,/157 W

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Ivan Izenberg DATE 12/23/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH
E.O. DECL: OADR ☐
DECLASSIFY ☑ RELEASE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

R 281130Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5524
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3963
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2301
CINCPAC FOR POLAD
AMCONSUL DANANG 821

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4226

SUBJECT: PRE-ELECTION PICTURE IN NHANH HOA PROVINCE

1. THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FOR KHANH HOA'S 166,240 VOTES IS HOTLY CONTESTED AND THE OUTCOME NOT YET CERTAIN, ALTHOUH IT APPEARS THE THIEU-KY TICKET IS MOST LIKELY SLATE TO EMERGE WITH A PLURALITY. CATHOLICS WITH ABOUT 25,000 VOTES ARE SPLIT BETWEEN HUONG, THEIU AND A FRACTION FOR HA THUC KY.

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 4226 C O N F I D E N T I A L
HUONG HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE WELL-ORGANIZED CATHOLIC CITIZENS' BLOC AND PROBABLY HAS THE EDGE. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWICE AS MANY BUDDHIST AS CATHOLIC VOTES IN KHANH HOA, AND THE GVN SLATE WILL GET FEW OF THEM. IN THE APPARENT ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FROM SAIGON, TRI QUANG FOLLOWERS (WHO ARE THE MAJORITY AMONG THE LOCAL BUDDHIST LEADERSHIP) WILL VOTE FOR EITHER SUU OR HUONG. DESPITE THIS OPPOSITION, HOWEVER, THE THIEU-KY SLATE DOES ENJOY SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THEY ARE FAR BETTER KNOWN THAN ANY OF THE OPPOSITION.

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Department of State

TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 04226 28 13:3Z

GVN OFFICIALS BY AND LARGE SUPPORT THE JOINT TICKET, AND THEIR INFLUENCE WILL COUNT WITH VILLAGERS. THERE ARE 28,000 MILITARY VOTERS IN KHANH HOA, AND MOST OF THEM ARE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT THIEU AND KY, AS WILL A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF MERCHANTS AND OTHER ENTREPRENEURS IN NHA TRANG WHO HAVE PROFITED FROM THE PRESENCE OF US TROOPS AND TOLERATION BY GVN OFFICIALS OF THEIR ACTIVITIES.

2. PREMULGATION OF THEPRO-TAM CHAU/UBA CHARTER HAS STIMULATED A FLURRY OF ANTI-THIEU/KY ACTIVITY BY THE BUDDHISTS OF KHANH HOA, ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF WHOM ARE

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 4226 C O N F I D E N T I A L
PRO-TAM CHAU. BANNERS AND SIGNS STRUNG AROUND NHA TRANG'S CENTRAL PAGODA DENOUNCE THE NEW CHARTER. THE QUESTION IS HOW FAR INFLUENCE OF POLITCALLY SOPHISTICATED BONZES IN NHA TRANG EXTENDS INTO SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE WHERE RURAL BUDDHISTS IF LEFT TO THEMSELVES ULD PROBABLY FOLLOW LEAD OF LOCAL VILLAGE OFFICIALS AND VOTE FOR THIEU AND KY.

3. THE AUGUST 20 APPEARANCE BY THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN NH TRANG WAS NOTEWORTHY FOR THE SPONTANEITY AND RECEPTIVITY OF THE CROWD AND FOR THE SHARP CRITICISM OF THE INCUMBENT REGIME VOICED BY THE OPPOSITON. ARRANGEMENTS BY LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE EXCELLENT. AS OF AUGUST 24, CANDIDATES' REPRESENTATIVES HAD CONDUCTED TWO OF THE FOUR JOINT MEETINGS THEY HAVE AGREED UPON; ACCORDING TO HA THUC KY'S REPRESENTATIVE, BOTH MEETINGS WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THIEU, SUU, HUONG, HA THUC KY, AND DZU HAVE BEEN MOST ACTIVE. THE ONLY COMPLAINT BY CANDIDATES' REPRESENTATIVE SO FAR HAS BEEN SLOW RECEIPT OF CAMPAIGN POSTERS; DISTRIBUTION OF PARTISAN CAMPAIGN MATERIAL WAS

PAGE 4 RUMJIR 4226 C O N F I D E N T I A L
DELAYED BY THE LOCAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE UNTIL AUGUST 25 TO ALLOW ALL REPRESENTATIVES TO RECEIVE THEIR MATERIAL FROM SAIGON. VIS GET-OUT-THE-VOTE ACTIVITY IS REGARDED

DECLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 04226 281313Z

BY AMERICAN ADVISORS AS VERY SATISFACTORY.

4. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE ELECTIONS IN KHANH HOA WILL BE FREE AND FAIR. WHILE SOME PARTISIANS OF CIVILAAN CANDIDATES ALLUD VAGUELY TO "AN ATOMOSPHERE OF COERCION" IN RURAL AREAS THEY HAVE AS YET PRODUCED NO PROOF. KHANH HOA'S WELL-REGARDED DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF FOR ADMINISTRATION, HIMSELF A HA THUC KY SUPPORTER, SYAS HE HAS PERSONALLY VISITED DISTRICT TOWNS AND VILLAGES TO ASSURE THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS UNDERSTAND THERE IS TO BE NO CHEATING. HE BELIEVES FRAUD WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONCEAL. BUNKER

DECLASSIFIED